

## Prelude (Prelude de Thésée) *Thésée, 1675*

GB-Lbl MS. Add. 39569 (Babell), no. 233, p. 174

LWV 51/50

*guay*

The first system of the prelude consists of four measures. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a quarter note. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a quarter rest, followed by a series of chords and moving lines, ending with a quarter note. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

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The second system of the prelude consists of four measures. The right hand continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring some grace notes. The left hand continues with chords and moving lines, ending with a quarter note. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

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The third system of the prelude consists of four measures. The right hand continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring some grace notes. The left hand continues with chords and moving lines, ending with a quarter note. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

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The fourth system of the prelude consists of four measures. The right hand continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, featuring some grace notes. The left hand continues with chords and moving lines, ending with a quarter note. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

## Source

*GB-Lbl*: London, British Library, MS Add. 39569 (London, 1702).

Thirty-three Lully pieces entered by Charles Babel (ca. 1634–1716) whose hand is neat and consistent. Same hand as that in *Tenbury*.

The Lully pieces are sequenced into Babel's compiled "suittes," a term evidently taken from Dieupart's *Six Suites de clavessin* (Amsterdam, 1701), from which twenty-three pieces were copied into *Babell*. Each key group is carefully designated "suite" with a number. Thirteen (out of 29) of the suites contain Lully arrangements, and seven use the overture as an opening movement (nos. 7, 15, 17, 21, 23, 26, and 27). On the basis of concordances, it appears that many of the arrangements in *Babell* also circulated in central Parisian sources. Gustafson brings up the possibility that Babel, rather than making his own arrangements, could have assembled his Lully arrangements from sources that also contain the remainder of his Parisian repertory.

Literature: Barry A.R. Cooper, *English Solo Keyboard Music of the Middle and Late Baroque*. D.Phil. diss. (Oxford University, 1974; reprinted, New York: Garland, 1989), 459; Gustafson 1979, 1:68–73, 2:187–221; *London, British Library MS Add. 39569, 17th-Century Keyboard Music* 19, facsimile edition, introduction by Bruce Gustafson (New York: Garland, 1987); Gustafson-Fuller 1990, 355, 372–3; Bruce Gustafson, "The Legacy of Instrumental Music of Charles Babel, Prolific Transcriber of Lully's Music," in *Jean-Baptiste Lully: Actes du colloque Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Heidelberg 1987*, ed. Jérôme de La Gorce and Herbert Schneider (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1990), 495–516; Bruce Gustafson, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., ed. Ludwig Finsher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), s.v. "Babel, Charles (1)"; Peter Holman, "Did Handel Invent the English Keyboard Concerto?" *The Musical Times* 144, no. 1883 (Summer 2003): 13–22.

Edition: Harris 2009, one piece (no. 131); Chung 2004, six pieces (nos. 128, 130, 131, 152, 243, 263); WLSCM, twenty-seven pieces (nos. 57, 97, 120, 123–4, 129, 132–6, 138, 143, 154, 182, 199, 209, 217–8, 231, 233–5, 258, 268–9, 280).

## Performance Notes

In the seventeenth century, the notation is under-prescriptive by modern standard and some elements of the performance may only be partially indicated or not indicated at all. Generally speaking, the performer has the discretion to supply in performance much that is not indicated in the source, such as by adding ornaments as well as melodic and rhythmic fillers, by spreading chords in a variety of ways, by embellishing the cadences, and sometimes even by enriching the texture with points of imitation. The modern performer can take lessons from D'Anglebert, who re-edited a selection of his autograph pieces for publication in 1689.<sup>1</sup> The performance attitude and elusive nature of the seventeenth-century French repertory has been exhaustively discussed by David Fuller, Ronald Broude, Bruce Gustafson, and

1. See Chung, "Lully, D'Anglebert and the Transmission of 17th-Century French Harpsichord Music," 586–92.

others.<sup>2</sup>

The player can refer to the table below for guidance on the interpretation of ornament symbols commonly found in manuscript sources.

*Tremblement*                      *Pincé*



*Port de voix*



*Cadence*                      *Coulé*                      *Harpegement*



In “c” time, eighth notes in conjunct motion (mm. 1–9, 11–3, etc.) should be rendered long and short successively as if notated in dotted values. Further advice on the rhythmic convention of *notes inégales* and other performance practice issues can be found in the “Introduction”.

## Critical Notes

No. 233 (p. 174), Prelude de Thésée (F) [Prelude from *Thésée* (1675) LWV 51/50 (F)]  
[No comments]

2. For example, see Ronald Broude. “Composition, Performance, and Text in Solo Music of the French Baroque,” *Text: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Studies* 15 (2002): 25.